

February 29, 2016

As a representative of the Southington-Cheshire Community YMCAs, I am honored to express my full endorsement for the PASS Red Ribbon School Program Bill.

In 2013, the Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation awarded a \$24,000 grant to the Southington-Cheshire Community YMCAs for our program aimed at combating childhood obesity. Specifically, the grant was to fund teacher training for teachers in all grades of the eight public elementary schools as part of a collaborative effort with the Southington School District. We had tested our own home-grown program with the teachers and students in three first grade classes in one school in 2012 prior to receiving this funding. Long time Physical Education Instructor Marcia Phelps contacted Carol Ciotto at CTAHPERD for assistance to train our target audience of 170 elementary school teachers. Carol, along with Marcia and Betsy Fede then facilitated PASS training for the entire group during the 2013-2014 school years in Southington.

This was a wonderful experience for Southington. Students flourished both physically and academically. Teachers witnessed the changes which included increased energy in the classroom and more enthusiasm for achievement in all grades. Parental comments relative to positive energy on the home front reinforced the efforts of teachers and students during the school day.

PASS has been further adopted by a local group leading the charge for "Activate Southington", which is an on-going initiative aimed at improving the overall health and wellness of Southington residents. Community leaders are working together to provide increased opportunities for active living, healthy eating, and physical activity.

David J. Donnelly
Southington-Cheshire Community YMCAs